

Appl. No. : 10/768,336
Filed : January 30, 2004

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1-43: (Canceled)

44. (Currently amended) An electronic catalog system, comprising:

an electronic catalog of items that are available for purchase, the electronic catalog including pages that include descriptions of the items, and providing functionality for online users to select items to purchase, ~~wherein the electronic catalog is embodied within a computer-readable medium;~~

a user interface through which the users can selectively elect to expose their respective purchase histories to other users, ~~the user interface being embodied within a computer-readable medium;~~

a database data repository which stores information about a plurality of groups of users, wherein each group represents a subset of a general user population, said database data repository further storing preference data indicative of elections made by the users to expose their respective purchase histories to other users; and

a computer system that executes a personalization component which is responsive to an online request from a first user for a catalog page that includes a description of a first item, by at least (a) determining whether the first item has been purchased by a second user who belongs to a selected group of said plurality of groups, said selected group being associated with the first user, and (b) in response to detecting that the first item has been purchased by the second user, notifying the first user during browsing of the electronic catalog that the first item has been purchased by the second user, wherein the personalization component uses said preference data to determine whether, and to whom, a given purchase ~~may~~ is to be exposed.

45. (Original) The electronic catalog system of Claim 44, wherein the selected group consists of a set of contacts of the first user.

46. (Original) The electronic catalog system of Claim 44, wherein the selected group consists of users listed in an electronic address book of the first user.

47. (Original) The electronic catalog system of Claim 44, wherein the personalization component notifies the first user that the first item has been purchased by the second user by supplementing the catalog page requested by the first user.

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48. (Original) The electronic catalog system of Claim 44, wherein the personalization component further provides contact information of the second user to the first user.

49. (Original) The electronic catalog system of Claim 44, wherein the personalization component further provides an option for the first user to send a message to the second user.

50. (Original) The electronic catalog system of Claim 44, wherein the selected group consists of members of an explicit membership community.

51 (Original) The electronic catalog system of Claim 44, wherein the selected group consists of members of an implicit membership community.

52. (Original) The electronic catalog system of Claim 44, wherein the selected group is a private group of users.

53-64: (Canceled)

65. (New) The electronic catalog system of Claim 44, wherein the user interface enables users to limit exposure of their respective purchases to other users on a user-by-user basis.

66. (New) The electronic catalog system of Claim 44, wherein the user interface enables users to limit exposure of their respective purchases to other users on an item-by-item basis.

67. (New) The electronic catalog system of Claim 44, wherein the user interface enables users to limit exposure of their respective purchase histories to specific item categories.

68. (New) The electronic catalog system of Claim 44, wherein the items are movie titles available for rent via the system.

69. (New) The electronic catalog system of Claim 44, wherein the purchase histories are item rental histories.

70. (New) A method of providing an electronic catalog system, comprising:
providing access to an electronic catalog of items that are available for purchase, the electronic catalog including pages that include descriptions of the items, and providing functionality for users to select items to purchase;
providing a user interface through which the users can selectively elect to expose their respective purchase histories to other users;
storing, in a data repository, information about a plurality of groups of users, and preference data indicative of elections made by the users to expose their respective

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purchase histories to other users, wherein each group represents a subset of a general user population; and

via execution of a personalization component, responding to a request from a first user for a catalog page that includes a description of a first item by at least (a) determining whether the first item has been purchased by a second user who belongs to a selected group of said plurality of groups, said selected group being associated with the first user, and (b) in response to detecting that the first item has been purchased by the second user, notifying the first user during browsing of the electronic catalog that the first item has been purchased by the second user, wherein the personalization component uses said preference data to determine whether, and to whom, a given purchase is to be exposed.

71. (New) A computer-readable medium having stored thereon a computer program that embodies the method of Claim 70.